DC BLACK LABEL

KING FORNÉS STEWART

DANGER STREET

BOOK 11

CODENAME: ASSASSIN

FORNÉS

17+ MATURE

THE DARK KNIGHT FIGHTS FOR HIS LIFE IN A UNIVERSE OF DANGER

WRITTEN BY

JASON AARON

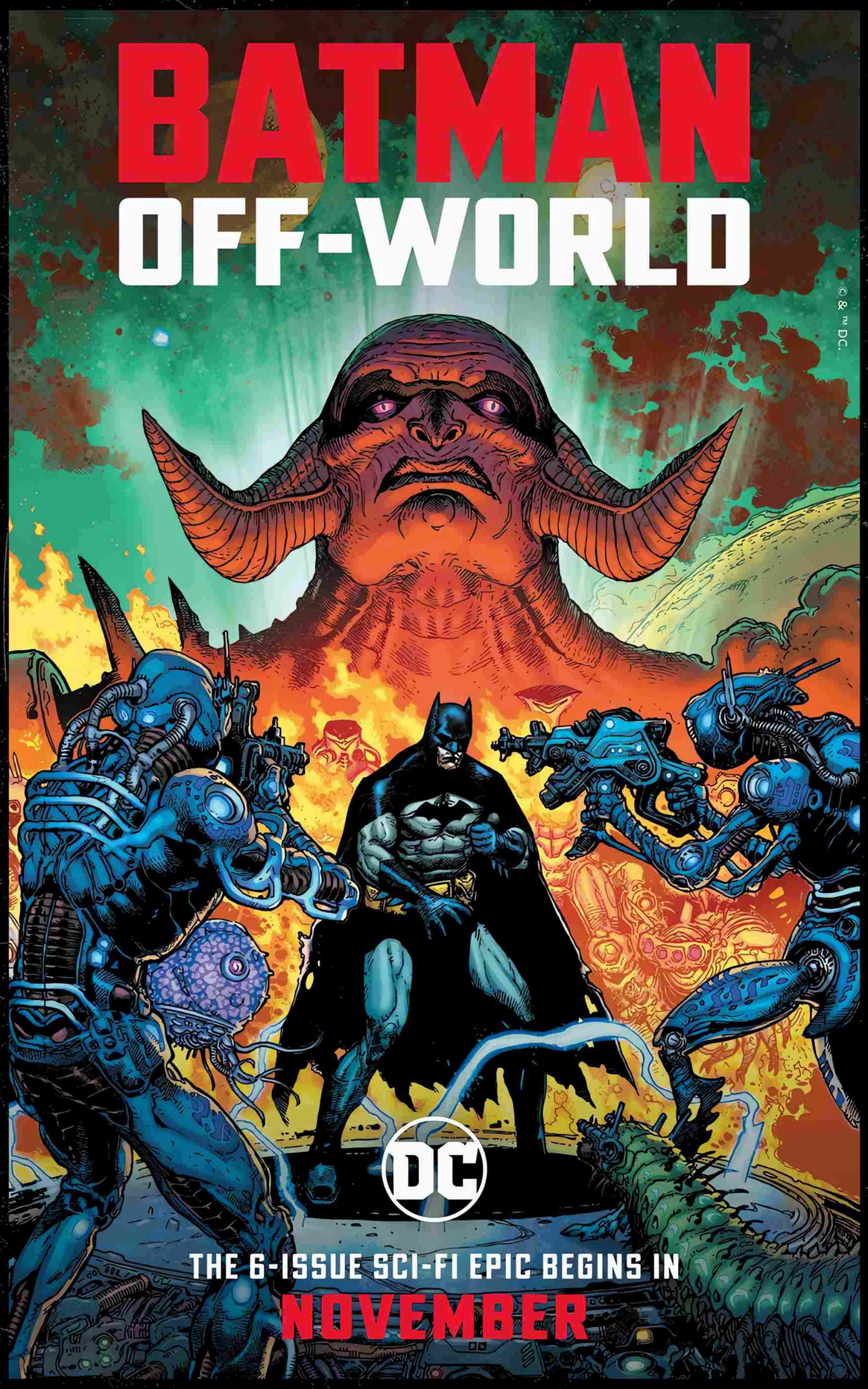
IN HIS FIRST-EVER BATMAN STORY

ART BY

DOUG MAHNKE

THE SUPERSTAR ARTIST OF *SWAMP THING: GREEN HELL* AND *DETECTIVE COMICS*

BATMAN OFF-WORLD



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DANGER STREET

BOOK ELEVEN

CHAPTER 11: CODENAME: ASSASSIN

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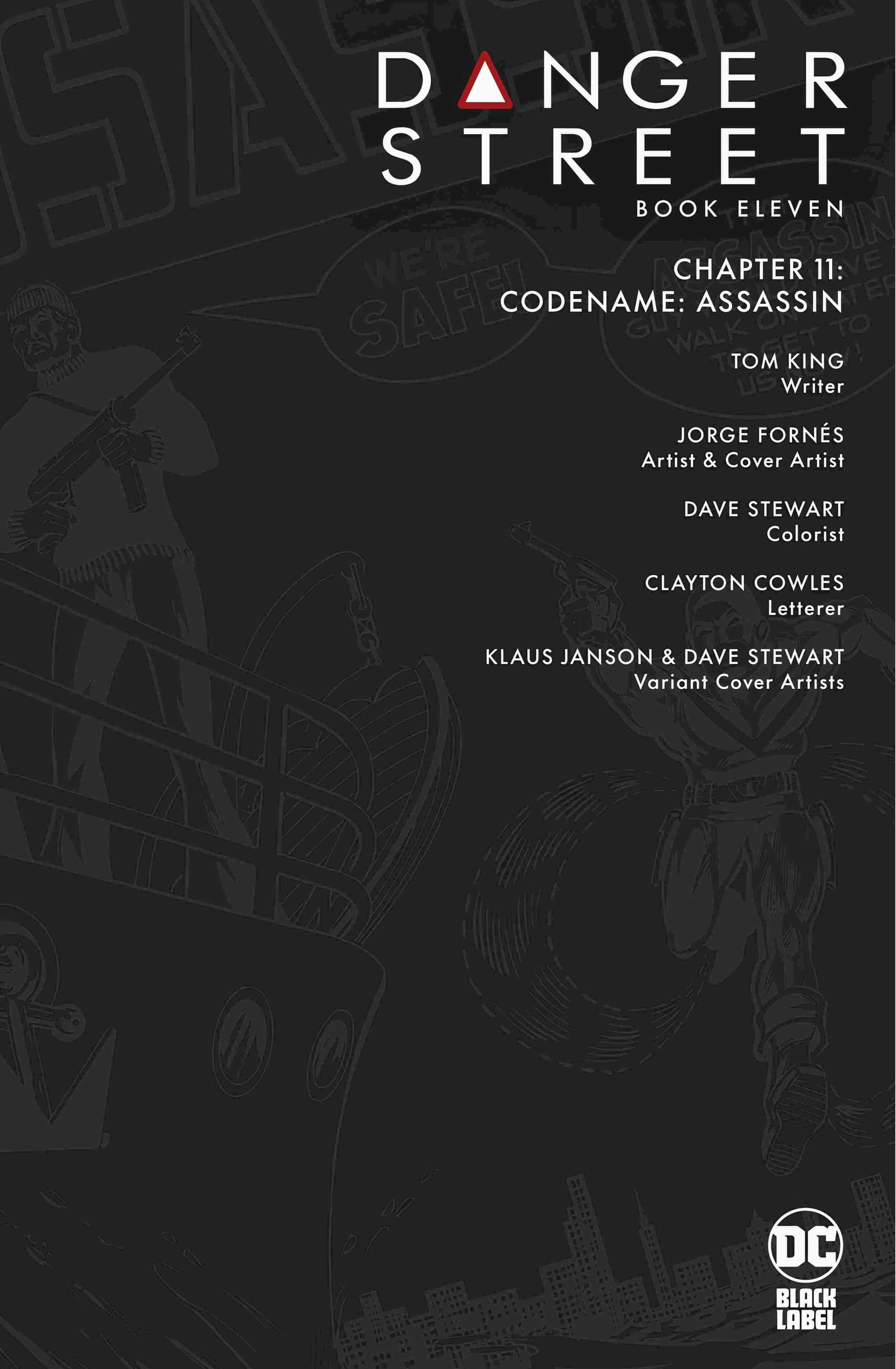

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AND NOW, THE ***PENULTIMATE*** CHAPTER IN OUR TALE OF LOVE, REVENGE, AND ***MAGIC*** MOST THRILLING!

LATE AT NIGHT, OUR PRINCESS STUMBLED AWAY FROM HER SACRED SLUMBER.

KNOCK KNOCK

ALL RIGHT! I'M ***COMING!***

FOR THOUGH THE DREAMS OF A PRINCESS ARE NOT EASILY ABANDONED...

KNOCK KNOCK

...WHEN AN OGRE IS BANGING AT THE GATES OF A CASTLE, IT IS BEST TO RESPOND PROMPTLY.

OKAY, ONE SECOND.

HEY! REMEMBER ME? ***JACK.*** FROM NEW YORK.

I'M ***SORRY*** ABOUT THE HOUR-- THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE ***GOT*** TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT.

IT'S ONE OF THOSE ***EMERGENCY*** GET-RIGHT-ON-IT SORT OF DEALS.

JACK?

I WAS ***GOING*** TO WAIT UNTIL THE MORNING TO COME UP HERE, BUT MY PLANE GOT IN EARLIER THAN I EXPECTED, THOUGH I KNOW IT'S ***STILL*** LATE.

AND SUDDENLY I WAS THINKING, WHY WAIT, THIS IS SO IMPORTANT AND YOU'RE A ***COP***, SO YOU'RE UP AT ALL HOURS.

Y'KNOW, WHY ***NOT?***

I'M MAKING SOME ***COFFEE.***

YOU WANT SOME?

SOUNDS GREAT, YEAH. THANK YOU.

YOU WON'T ***BELIEVE*** THE STORY I'VE GOT TO TELL YOU.

BUT A DAY'S WALK FROM THE PRINCESS'S CASTLE, THE FLYING STEED THAT HAD TRANSPORTED THE OGRE TO HER KINGDOM SAT IDLE ON THE GROUND.

GREENTEAM

SHE WAS AN IMPRESSIVELY LARGE ANIMAL, WHICH WAS FORTUNATE.

FOR TUCKED IN HER AMPLE BELLY WERE TWO MONSTERS.

HE'S GOING TO **BETRAY** YOU! HE'S **MY** KNIGHT!

I PUT THE **SWORD** ON HIS SHOULDER AND EVERYTHING!

AND SIX ROGUES.

ALL WAITING IMPATIENTLY FOR THE OGRE TO COMPLETE HIS REDEMPTION QUEST AND RETURN TO THEM WITH THE POWER TO RESTORE THEIR ESSENCES.

STOP **WHINING,** STUPID.

YOU'RE SUCH A **BABY.**

DON'T YOU HAVE TO BE A *KING* FOR THE SWORD THING TO WORK?

THAT'S RIGHT, *JOHNNY*, YEAH.

SURE DO. *EVERYONE* KNOWS THAT.

I *AM* A KING! I AM *THE COMMODORE!*

BOOOORING...

A *COMMODORE* ISN'T A *KING*, DUMB BUTT. AND *ANYWAY*, YOU CAN'T JUST MAKE YOURSELF A KING.

THAT'S *ILLEGAL.*

I DIDN'T *MAKE* MYSELF KING.

I WAS *TRANSFORMED.* YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED. SHUT UP.

AM I A *KING* TOO?

KRAMER

NO! I'M THE *ONLY* KING!

BECAUSE I *BEAT* YOU! FAIR AND SQUARE, NO TAKE-BACKS!

WHAT? YOU *ARE* A DUMB BUTT.

UH, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CAN'T *MOVE.* WHO DID *YOU* BEAT?

YOU'RE TOO *YOUNG.* YOU WOULDN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND.

MY BIRTHDAY IS *ONE* MONTH AND *THREE* DAYS AFTER YOURS.

THAT'S NOT *SO* MUCH, YOU KNOW! WE'RE, LIKE, ALMOST *TWINS!*

MARY, YOU THINK YOU'RE SO SMART! BUT IF YOU WERE SMART YOU'D HAVE ALL THE MONEY, AND YOU *DON'T!*

YOU'D EVEN BE *PRETTY!*

POFF

I *AM* PRETTY!

YOU'RE UGLY! EVERYONE SEES YOU! *I* SEE YOU!

YOU'RE NOT A *KING!* YOU'RE JUST A STUPID *MONSTER!*

FAR ABOVE, PAST THE STARS, PAST THE HEAVENS, PAST EVEN THE DREAMS OF MEN...

...IN THE REALM WHERE ALL THAT WAS SUBTLE AND NUANCED HAD BEEN LONG AGO BURNED AWAY, LEAVING ONLY THE PUREST GOOD AND THE MOST CORRUPT EVIL.

THERE.

A DRAGON HAD FALLEN.

YOU DID WELL.

I CAN... THE CRACKS...IN... EVERYTHING...

WE'RE... IT'S...IT'S... DONE...

WILL THERE BE A *FIFTH* WORLD?

NO.

YOU ARE *EVER* SO SURE.

ARROGANCE IS THE *WEAKNESS* OF THE KIND.

YES, AND YOU AND YOUR... *DEMONS*... ARE...ARE... RENOWNED FOR YOUR...

...MODESTY.

HEH.

HAHAHAHAHAHAHA

AND FAR BELOW, UNAWARE THAT THE DRAGONS' FATE WAS THEIRS AS WELL, THE OGRE AND THE PRINCESS MET IN HER CASTLE.

MY *EX* GOT THIS FOR ME. AS A JOKE.

I'D TOSS IT, BUT THEN IT FEELS LIKE *HE* WINS, I GUESS.

I DON'T *KNOW.* NOT EVERYTHING MAKES SENSE.

SURE.

LIKE WHEN A FRIENDLY *NEWSCASTER* TOOK YOU TO DINNER AND THEN TURNED INTO A HAIRY, YELLOW BEAST WEARING A RED BOA.

WHOM *YOU* THEN COLD-COCKED.

I HAVE A *LOT* OF GUNS IN THE HOUSE.

I NEED A *FAVOR.*

I JUST NEED TO *BORROW* SOMETHING. I *WILL* RETURN IT.

NOTHING BIG OR EXCITING.

NO.

DON'T SAY THAT.

YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M *ASKING.*

I KNOW WHO YOU *WORK* FOR.

AND I'M PRETTY SURE *YOU* KNOW IT TOO.

I'M NOT PLAYING THIS *GAME* WITH YOU.

YOU HAVE A *HELMET.* YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT IS.

I NEED IT. IT'S IMPORTANT FOR PEOPLE THAT I'M *HELPING.*

THIS ISN'T SOMETHING THAT YOU NEED TO *FIGHT.* YOU CAN JUST *GIVE* IT TO ME.

I DIDN'T KNOW TV TALK SHOW HOSTS COULD ISSUE *WRITS* FOR EVIDENCE.

GUESS I GOT TO READ THAT *CONSTITUTION* AGAIN.

IT'S A *JOKE* TO YOU?

YOU THINK I'M HERE AS JUST A *MAN?*

AH, @#‡$.

I AM THE CREEPER!

I NEED THE HELMET!

AND YOU WILL GIVE IT TO ME!

JESUS.

REALLY?

=SIGH= ALL RIGHT.

IT'S IN THE DRAWER. JUST OVER THERE.

GIVE ME A SEC.

IT'S TO SAVE PEOPLE, OKAY? THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE. MAYBE I MADE IT, AND I'M TRYING TO CORRECT THAT.

YOU'RE A COP. YOU HAVE TO APPRECIATE THAT.

YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT.

I'M A COP.

AND YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR...

...WHATEVER THE HELL, BEING DRESSED LIKE THAT AT THIS HOUR IN MY HOUSE AND DOING WHATEVER THIS IS YOU'RE DOING.

GOT TO BE AGAINST SOME LAW.

OKAY?

NOW, WHY DON'T YOU LIE ON THE FLOOR WHILE I CALL IT IN.

WHAT?! WOMAN, IS THIS A JOKE?! DO YOU WANT ME TO LAUGH?!

NO, JACK, I JUST WANT--

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

BLAMM

@#$%!

BLAMM

OH, GOD DAMMIT!

OUTSIDE OF THE PRINCESS'S PALACE, A BENEVOLENT, GRACIOUS PRINCE AND A SCRAPPY YOUNG LAD SAT IN THEIR CARRIAGE EYEING THE REDOUBTABLE MOAT AHEAD.

BLAMM

BLAMM

BLAMM

THE PRINCE HAD SPENT THE PREVIOUS DAY WORKING WITH THE SON OF DRAGONS TO DIG UP THE BODY OF THE LAD'S GREAT FRIEND.

CRAP.

THAT BODY WAS PLACED IN THE LADS' SACRED CRYPT WHILE ALL PARTIES INVOLVED CONSPIRED ON HOW THEY MIGHT REVIVE IT AND THUS SAVE EXISTENCE.

HOLY @#!$!

WE GOT TO GO!

A PLAN WAS DEVELOPED, AND THE PRINCE AND THE LAD SET OUT TO EXECUTE IT.

NON-FAT.

DO **NOT** GET OUT OF THIS TRUCK.

UNFORTUNATELY, THAT PLAN WAS INTERRUPTED BY THE BOOM OF A MAGIC WAND.

Ø$%ʃ THAT.

WE BEEN SITTING HERE FOR ***HOURS*** WAITING FOR NOTHING AND NOW THERE'S SOMETHING AND NOW I'M NOT GOING TO DO ANYTHING?

NO. NO, NO, NO, NO.

AND THE TWO COMPANIONS WERE FORCED TO SCRAPE TOGETHER A NEW SCHEME IN THE MERE MOMENTS AVAILABLE TO THEM.

STAY.

SLAM!

WHICH WAS MORE PALATABLE TO ONE THAN THE OTHER.

YOU THINK YOU'RE ALL GOOD?!

WHAT THE Ø$%ʃ IS A ***WARLORD,*** ANYWAY?!

WHO WANTS TO BE THE LORD OF #≈£%∞#@ ***WAR?!***

THE LAD UNDERSTOOD PERFECTLY THE INSTRUCTIONS OF HIS PRINCE.

@$%#.

BUT UNDERSTANDING AND OBEYING ARE TWO DIFFERENT ACTIONS ENTIRELY.

WARLORD.

AND WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT A GOOD, STRONG, WELL-RAISED LAD IS ALWAYS WELL-VERSED IN THE SUBTLE ART OF COMPREHENSION...

"STAY."

LIKE A #≈$%∞#@ DOG.

...THEY NEVER DO CARE MUCH FOR THE NECESSITY OF ACQUIESCING.

YOU DIDN'T EVEN ROLL DOWN THE WINDOW SOME! THAT @#!$'LL GET YOU IN TROUBLE!

AND SO IT COMES AS NO SHOCK THAT THE LAD IGNORED EVEN THIS WELL-GIVEN WARNING.

YOU HEAR ME?

GREEK

BUT IN THE END, WAS THAT NOT TO THE BENEFIT OF ALL?

YOU'RE IN ALL *SORTS* OF #≈$%∞#@ TROUBLE!

CLANG

INSIDE THE WALLS OF THE CASTLE, THE PRINCESS TRIED HER BEST TO SAVE THE DYING OGRE.

WHICH WAS, ONE MIGHT SAY, A RATHER KIND ACT--THE KIND OF ACT YOU'D EXPECT FROM ONE OF HER GRACE AND FORTITUDE.

C'MON...

IN FACT, SHE WAS SO DETERMINED TO REVIVE THE DYING CREATURE THAT SHE DID NOT HEAR HER DRAWBRIDGE BEING BROKEN DOWN.

OR THE FOOTFALLS APPROACHING.

JUST *BREATHE.*

YOU'RE GOING TO BE FINE.

THUS, WHEN THE PRINCE FINALLY ENTERED HER HALL, SHE WAS CAUGHT UNAWARE.

WHAT THE *HELL* IS GOING ON?!

AND IN A STATE OF FRIGHT, SEEING HIS WEAPON, RECOGNIZING HIM AS THE FUGITIVE RAPSCALLION SHE ONCE IMPRISONED, SHE TOOK IMMEDIATE ACTION.

CREEPER?

@%#@!

AND THAT, THEN, WAS THE END OF OUR DEAR PRINCE.

BLAM!

ST...
STAR...

Ø$%ʃ!

NNNN.

BUT A *WISP* OF A MOMENT LATER, OUR MOST HONORABLE LAD BECAME THE THIRD VISITOR TO THE PRINCESS'S CASTLE THAT NIGHT.

WARLORD?! WHERE YOU *AT?!*

THE FIRST VISITOR WAS NOW DEAD.

YOU HEAR THAT *GUNSHOT?!*

THE SECOND... SIMILARLY DECEASED.

WARLORD?!

WALKING IN THEIR FOOTSTEPS WAS THEREFORE A TERRIBLY DANGEROUS PATH TO TAKE.

NON-FAT?

BUT AS YOU HAVE SEEN, THESE LADS TREAD WHERE OTHERS MIGHT NOT.

LADY COP?

AND THAT HAS MADE ALL THE DIFFERENCE.

DON'T...

PLEASE, DON'T CALL ME *LADY COP.*

IT *REALLY* PISSES ME OFF.

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE LADS' SANCTUARY, THE SON OF DRAGONS DELIVERED WORD OF THE COMING APOCALYPSE.

I HAVE SPOKEN WITH MY *FATHERS.*

THEY HAVE MADE THEIR *ATTEMPT.* IT WAS NOT ENOUGH.

THE *SKY* WILL NOW *FALL.*

Darkseid is.

THE LADS TOOK THE NEWS IN STRIDE.

HEY, I DIDN'T KNOW THAT. THAT'S *COOL,* MAN.

KRUNCH HAS TWO DADS TOO. *THEY'RE* COOL.

YEAH. THEY'RE COOL.

WE ARE SOON TO BE *CRUSHED* BY THE WEIGHT OF ALL THAT IS ABOVE.

Darkseid is.

AH, DUDE, DON'T WORRY ABOUT *THAT.* NON-FAT'S ON IT.

I'M KIND OF A *PROFESSIONAL* AT MOCKING HIM, BUT NON-FAT'S, LIKE, *SURPRISINGLY* SOLID.

Y'KNOW, FOR A GUY THAT FALLS OVER IF A *FLY* SNEEZES.

THE GODS HAVE *FAILED,* AND YOU NOW EXPECT ME TO HAVE FAITH IN A *CHILD?*

Darkseid is.

AND *SMASH!* KRUNCH IS DOWN!

Darkseid is.

BANANAS ONCE AGAIN HAS EMERGED AS THE *UNDISPUTED* CHAMPION OF THE WORLD!

I THINK MY CONTROLLER'S BROKE. LET'S DO IT AGAIN.

THIS IS NOT HOW I EXPECTED TO DIE.

Darkseid is.

BACK AT THE PRINCESS'S PALACE, THE LADS' BELOVED COMRADE EXPLAINED TO HER HIGHNESS HIS ONCE-LOFTY PLAN FOR RESCUING THE REALM.

SO I WAS LIKE, I KNOW WHO HAS THE MASK THAT CAN REVIVE GOOD LOOKS AND GET THE ***ATLAS SOUL*** AND ALL THAT.

AND I WAS LIKE, BUT YOU DON'T KNOW ***LADY COP***--SORRY--SHE PLAYS BY THE RULES.

SKINNY

SHE'S ***NEVER*** GIVING IT UP. SHE'S GOING TO HOLD ON TO IT WITH THAT ***DEATH*** GRIP SHE'S GOT.

AND ***HE*** WAS ALL, THEN WE NEED TO ***TAKE*** IT FROM HER.

I'LL WAIT UNTIL SHE'S ***ASLEEP,*** SO IT WON'T BE A THING.

AND THEN ***I'LL*** GO IN AND FIND IT AND GET IT.

AND THEN HE'S LIKE, WHERE DOES SHE LIVE, AND I WAS LIKE, I KNOW, BUT I CAN'T TELL IT, 'CAUSE IT'S, LIKE, ***FIFTY*** TURNS.

SO I HAD TO GO ***WITH.*** AND HE WAS ALL PUTTING UP A FRONT ABOUT THAT, BUT I SAID I ***HAD*** TO, AND I WON, BECAUSE, Y'KNOW... LIKE, ***ME.***

SO WE WENT AND I SHOWED HIM ***YOUR*** PLACE AND WE WAITED FOR THE LIGHTS TO GO OUT SO HE COULD DO THE THING.

THEN THIS OTHER DUDE GOES IN, AND WE'RE LIKE, WHO'S ***THAT,*** BUT WE DIDN'T KNOW, SO WE WAITED AND THEN THERE WERE #≈£%∞#@ SHOTS.

SO ***WARLORD*** RUSHES IN BECAUSE HE'S THE JUSTICE LEAGUER OR WHATEVER, AND HE JUST WANTS ***ME*** TO STAY IN THE TRUCK. HE TOLD ME I HAD TO.

SKINNY

BUT ***WHATEVER,*** I DIDN'T.

AND THAT'S THE ***WHOLE*** STORY RIGHT THERE.

BEGINNING TO #≈£%∞#@ END.

THE PRINCESS CONSIDERED THIS TALE AND THEN ASKED A QUESTION.

THE BIG GUY. ***ATLAS.*** THIS GUY WHO CAN SAVE THE... WHATEVER.

I GOT ***HIM*** AT THE MORGUE. CAN'T WE JUST USE THAT ***SPELL*** THING THESE GUYS GOT FROM THE GREEN TEAM TO BRING ***HIM*** BACK?

I ASKED THAT @€%#!

THAT ***ORION*** DUDE SAYS ATLAS, LIKE, ***GAVE*** HIS SOUL AND, LIKE, POWER AND @#ΠØ AWAY, AND THAT WAS #≈€%∞#@ THAT.

THERE'S ***NOTHING*** THERE TO BRING BACK. IT'S ***ALL*** IN GOOD LOOKS.

HAVING MADE HER INQUIRY, THE PRINCESS TOOK A LONG MOMENT TO UNDERSTAND ALL THAT WAS HAPPENING AND THAT HAD HAPPENED.

OKAY.

WHEN SHE SPOKE AGAIN IT WAS WITH TOTAL CONFIDENCE, A LEADER ISSUING ORDERS.

I KNOW YOU DRIVE. TAKE HIS TRUCK BACK TO ***YOUR*** HOUSE. ***DON'T*** RUN ANYONE OVER.

GET GOOD LOOKS'S BODY ***AND*** THE CEREMONY INSTRUCTION THING FROM THE GREEN TEAM.

BRING IT ALL BACK ***HERE.*** ASAP.

THE LAD WAS TAKEN ABACK BY THIS MARTIAL TONE.

WHAT? SERIOUSLY?

FOR THOUGH HE HAD BEEN ACQUAINTED WITH HER HIGHNESS FOR MANY YEARS, THOUGH THEY HAD SHARED MANY A CONVERSATION, HE STILL DID NOT TRULY KNOW HER.

I'M GOING TO GO GET ***DRESSED.*** I'LL MEET YOU RIGHT HERE.

THE MASK IS IN THE ***EVIDENCE ROOM.*** I DON'T KEEP IT WITH ME.

NOT UNTIL THAT MOMENT.

JUST LIKE THAT?

FOR THEN HE FIRST RECOGNIZED THAT WHAT HE ONCE ASSUMED TO BE WEAKNESS IN THE PRINCESS WAS IN FACT HER GREATEST STRENGTH.

I SPEAK, OF COURSE, OF HER HOPE FOR A BETTER WORLD.

NON-FAT, I GOT ***TWO*** DEAD SUPER-HEROES IN MY BREAKFAST NOOK. YOU SAY YOU GOT A WAY TO BRING PEOPLE BACK TO ***LIFE.***

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO? ***NOT*** #≈€%∞#@ TRY IT?

NOT FAR FROM THE LAD'S REVELATION, A GREAT AND HORRID MONSTER TRIED TO ASSERT HIS OWN WILL OVER OTHERS, AS THE PRINCESS HAD JUST DONE.

PUT THAT *DOWN!*

IT'S NOT A *TOY!*

THE RESULTS, HOWEVER, WERE MARKEDLY DIFFERENT.

I BET I CAN DO IT IN *ONE* STROKE!

NEVER LOST *SEVEN* ARMS IN A DAY BEFORE.

THAT *SWORD* IS WORTH MORE THAN YOUR LIVES!

DO YOU KNOW WHAT I *TRADED* FOR THAT?!

YES!

OH, *THERE* IT GOES.

SHINK

CHILDREN.

JUST... EVERYWHERE.

THE MONSTER WAS, DESPITE HIS INHERENT EVIL, IN FACT QUITE PERCEPTIVE.

WHEREVER YOU GO, HOWEVER FAR INTO THE ABYSS YOU WISH TO EXPLORE...

...CHILDREN ARE FOUND.

SO WHEN THE SKY FELL ON URITRITUS, IT WAS NOT JUST THE OCEANS AND MOUNTAINS AND PLAINS THAT SUFFERED.

IT WAS NOT JUST THE CIVILIZATIONS THAT WERE LOST FOREVER.

IT WAS ALSO ALL THE BOYS AND GIRLS AT PLAY OUTSIDE OR SLEEPING PEACEFULLY IN THEIR ROOMS WITH THEIR STUFFIES TUCKED IN THEIR ARMS.

IT WAS ALL THE YOUNG ONES DREAMING OF ALL THE STORIES TO WHICH THEY ARE ETERNALLY DRAWN.

LEGENDS OF OGRES AND PRINCESSES AND PRINCES AND NOBLE LADS AND DRAGONS AND KNIGHTS AND ROGUES AND MONSTERS...

SOME DISTANCE, BUT NOT ALL THAT MUCH DISTANCE, FROM THE NEWLY DEAD LANDS, THE PRINCESS OF OUR TALE SEARCHED A SECRET CHAMBER FOR THE ONE OBJECT THAT MIGHT SHIELD THOSE STILL LEFT ALIVE.

01-24

01-25

AS HER FINGERS TOUCHED THE MASK, SHE HESITATED, ANTICIPATING SOME ELECTRIC CONNECTION BETWEEN THE OBJECT AND HERSELF.

BUT NONE CAME.

"I AM A FOOL IN A MOB OF FOOLS," SHE THOUGHT. "THERE IS NO MAGIC IN THE WORLD."

YET STILL SHE CLUTCHED HER PRIZE AND MADE HER WAY BACK TOWARD THE COLD NIGHT.

BUT JUST AS SHE WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE THAT HALLOWED HALL, SHE SPIED ANOTHER MYSTICAL AND MYSTERIOUS ITEM THAT CAUSED HER TO HESITATE.

YOU SEE, WHEN A PRINCESS SPIES A PRINCE IN PERIL, SHE CANNOT HELP BUT FEEL A PROFOUND DUTY TO AID HIM IN ANY WAY SHE CAN.

WHAT? *CHIEF?* THAT YOU? WHAT'S GOING ON?

COOPER, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU *DOING* HERE?

WELL, I WAS PATROLLING. WHEN THE EVIDENCE ROOM OPENS, I GET AN *ALERT* ON MY PHONE.

I DIDN'T THINK IT'D BE *YOU.* I THOUGHT IT WAS MICE. I WAS GOING TO KILL SOME MICE.

OR, Y'KNOW, CHECK THE TRAPS.

THIS DAY...

CHIEF? I'M SORRY, I'M A LITTLE *LOST.*

IS THAT... IS THAT THE BAG OF *DIAMONDS?* FROM THE DESERT KILLING?

CHIEF, ARE YOU...

YOU'RE NOT *STEALING* THAT, ARE YOU?

THK!

AS THE PRINCESS BATTLED HER WAY OUT OF THE CORRIDORS OF MYSTERY, THE LADS DEBATED THEIR DESTINATION AND THEIR DESTINY!

YOU WANT *US* TO COME?

MAN, YOU ALL DO *YOU.*

YOU DON'T WANT TO BE THERE WHEN *LOOKS* GETS BACK, THAT'S NOT ON ME.

GUILT?! FIRST I FIND OUT YOU CAN *REVIVE* THE DEAD, NOW I DISCOVER NON-FAT CAN SPONTANEOUSLY TURN INTO MY *MOTHER.*

WHAT FURTHER *WONDERS* AWAIT IN THE DAYS AHEAD?

I WANT TO SEE GOOD LOOKS. I *MISS* HIM. HE WAS A GOOD FRIEND.

KRUNCH ONCE *AGAIN* MAKES AN ARGUMENT THAT CANNOT BE DISPUTED BY RHYME OR REASON.

I GUESS WE'RE *COMING.*

YES...

AS... AS...AM I...

DUDE, WHAT? NO.

YOU CAN BARELY **WALK.** DON'T WE HAVE ENOUGH **DEAD** PEOPLE IN THIS ALREADY?

SKINNY

THERE WILL BE...ENERGY...IN THE...THE ROOM...THAT...THAT... YOU CANNOT...COMPREHEND... OR...CONTROL...

BUT I... I CAN...

WARLORD WILL...NEED... MY...MY... AID...HE...

DUDE.

I CAN **HELP** HIM WALK.

YOU CAN LEAN ON ME, **STARMAN.** I'M VERY STRONG.

OH... YES...THANK YOU...

YOU...ARE... **GOOD...**

ALL RIGHT. FINE. Ø$%ʃ. ANYONE ELSE?

GOING TO BE A CROWDED #≈€%∞#@ KITCHEN.

AND SO FROM THE MOUTHS OF LADS COME THE PUREST OF TRUTHS.

FOR THE PALACE SANCTUARY WAS INDEED CRAMMED WITH WARRIORS TRUE AND BRAVE.

ALL DETERMINED, HERE AT THE PRECIPICE OF DISASTER, TO COMMIT THEMSELVES ONCE AGAIN TO THE GOODLY PRINCIPLE THAT THERE SHALL BE A TOMORROW!

THAT EACH OF US MAY TELL OUR OWN TALE!

AND THAT EACH TELLING MAY HAVE ITS OWN HAPPILY EVER AFTER!

Darkseid is.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

SHOULD WE...

DOES ANYONE HAVE SOMETHING TO *SAY* BEFORE WE GET STARTED?

WELL, I'M KIND OF HUNGRY.

DO YOU HAVE ANY GRAPES?

AND YET, DESPITE ALL THIS STRENGTH AND COURAGE, MONSTERS STILL ROAMED IN THE DARKNESS OUTSIDE THE PALACE THREATENING TO RUIN THE COMING REDEMPTION.

MARY, YOU KNOW THIS ***CAN'T*** ACTUALLY WORK, RIGHT?

WE CAN'T JUST ***PRESS*** A SPECIAL BUTTON AND EVERYTHING RESETS.

I ***KNOW*** THINGS NOW. I AM OLDER, AND I'VE ***SEEN*** THINGS. AND THE WORLD DOESN'T WORK THAT WAY AT ALL.

"IN THE ***REAL*** WORLD THERE ARE WINNERS AND THERE ARE LOSERS.

"WINNERS, LIKE ***ME,*** ARE PEOPLE WHO PLAYED THE GAME WELL. AND LOSERS, LIKE ***YOU,*** ARE JUST EVERYONE ELSE THAT'S LEFT OVER.

"YOU CAN'T ***REVERSE*** THAT. IT'S WRITTEN IN STONE.

"BEST THING TO DO IS JUST ***ACCEPT*** IT AND GO AND GET OUT OF THE WAY OF PEOPLE WHO ARE ***BETTER*** THAN YOU.

"SOME PEOPLE ARE ***A-LIST*** AND SOME PEOPLE ARE ***D-LIST.***

NOTHING CHANGES THAT.

AND ***THERE*** YOU HAVE IT--THE ESSENTIAL ***QUESTION*** OF ALL ***LIFE!***

CAN ANYONE, ANYWHERE ***EVER*** DEFY ***FATE?!***

TO BE ***CONCLUDED!***

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"COMPLEX, COMPELLING, AND DEEPLY ABSORBING" —AIPT

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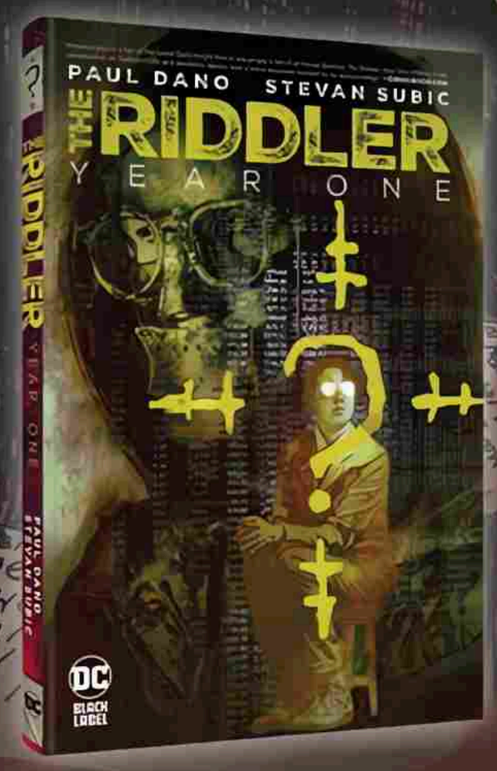
UNCOVER THE ORIGIN OF THE VILLAIN FROM *THE BATMAN* FILM!

THE RIDDLER YEAR ONE

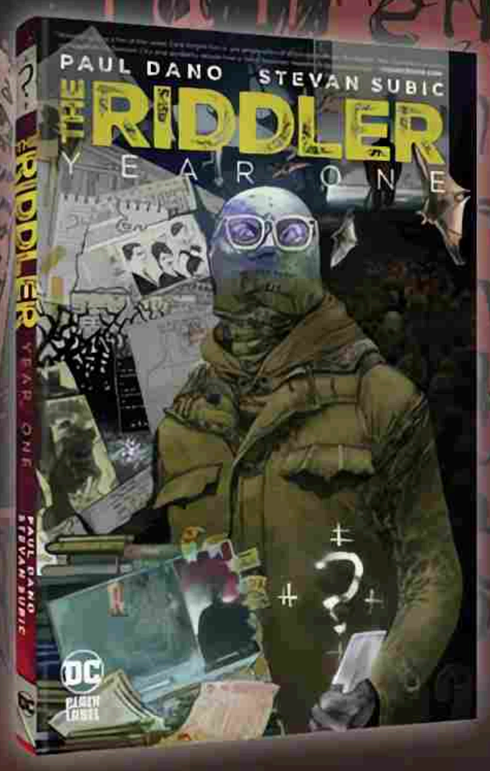
WRITTEN BY *THE BATMAN* STAR
PAUL DANO

ART BY
STEVAN SUBIC

ON SALE NOW



Main cover



Direct market exclusive variant cover

JASON AARON WRITER
DOUG MAHNKE PENCILLER JAIME MENDOZA INKER
DAVID BARON COLORIST TROY PETERI LETTERER

BATMAN OFF-WORLD

PREVIEW PREVIEW

SEND A SQUAD OF FIRESTORMERS TO HOLD THE PERIMETER.

AND TELL THEM I'M ON THE WAY.

OUT OF MY ELEMENT. WAY OUT.

WITH LITTLE TO NO INTEL TO GO ON.

LOOKING FOR ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO **ASK**.

FIRESTORMERS IN POSITION!

WHERE IS IT?! I'M GONNA RIP ITS WINGS OFF!

ONES FROM THE SHUTTLE ARE ALREADY ACTIVE AGAIN. PARALYTICS ON THOSE BATARANGS WOULD'VE KEPT A FULL-GROWN **HUMAN** DOWN FOR AN HOUR.

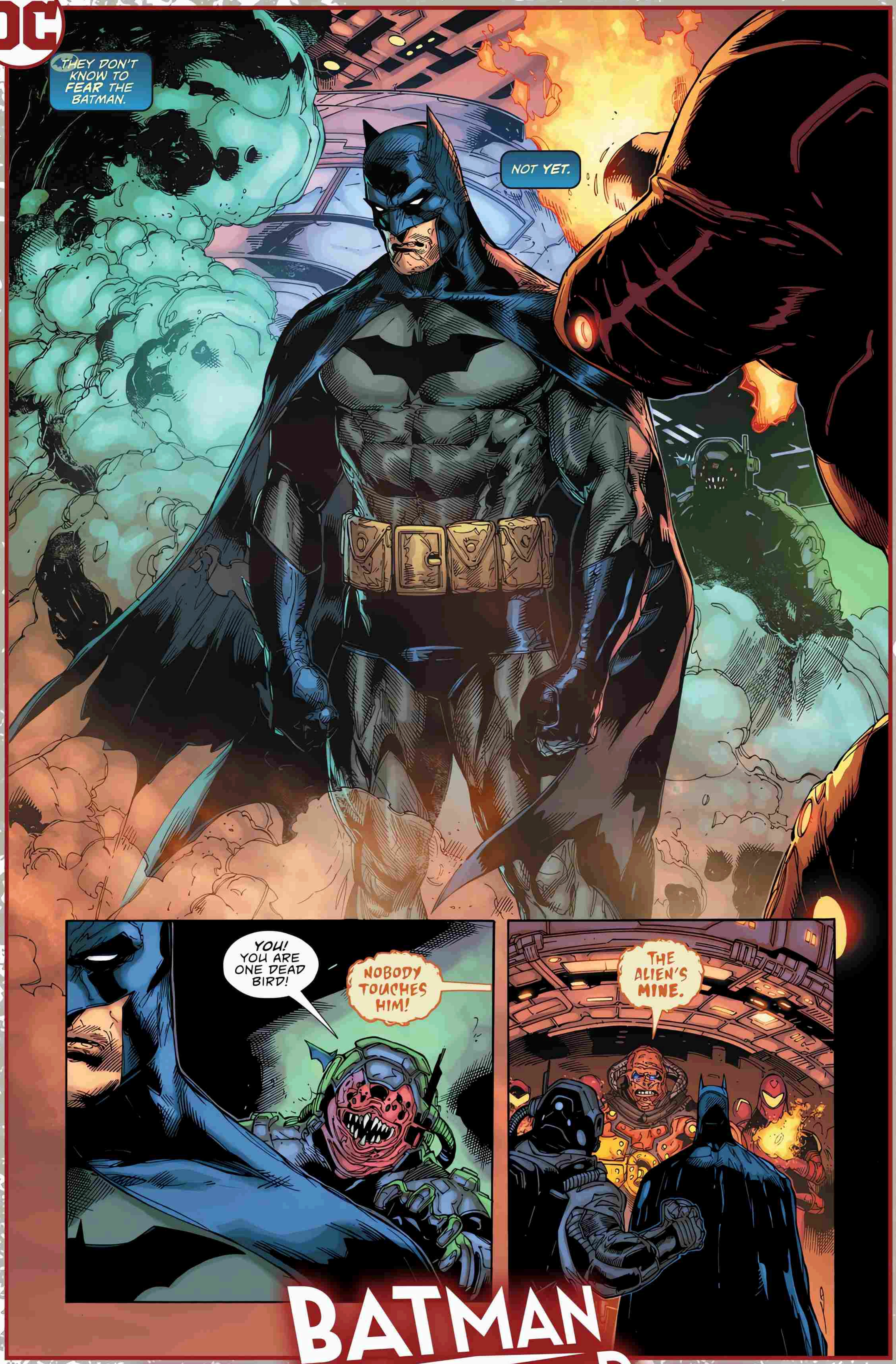
BUT THE ONLY ONE HERE WHO'S HUMAN IS **ME**.

I FOCUS ON MY TRAINING. REMEMBER WHAT IT IS I'VE **BECOME**.

THEY DON'T KNOW. THEY'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN A **BAT**. AS THE SMOKE CLEARS, I HEAR A FEW OF THEM **CHUCKLE**.

BATMAN OFF-WORLD

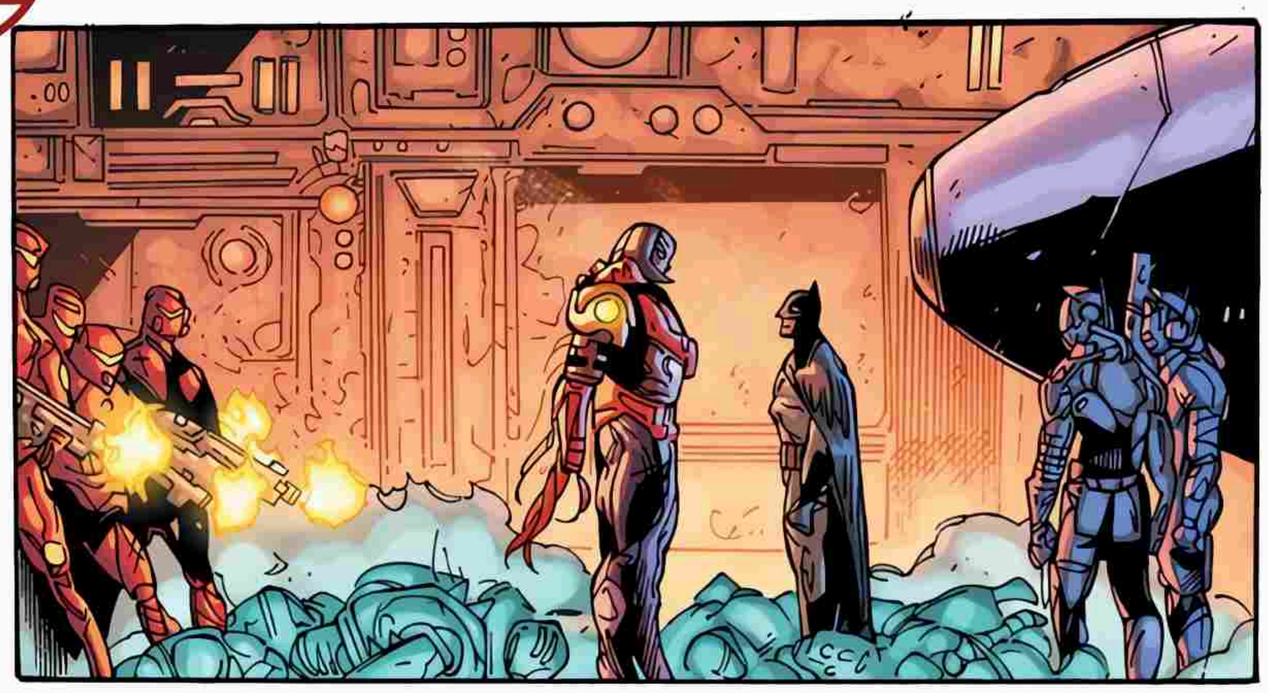
PREVIEW PREVIEW

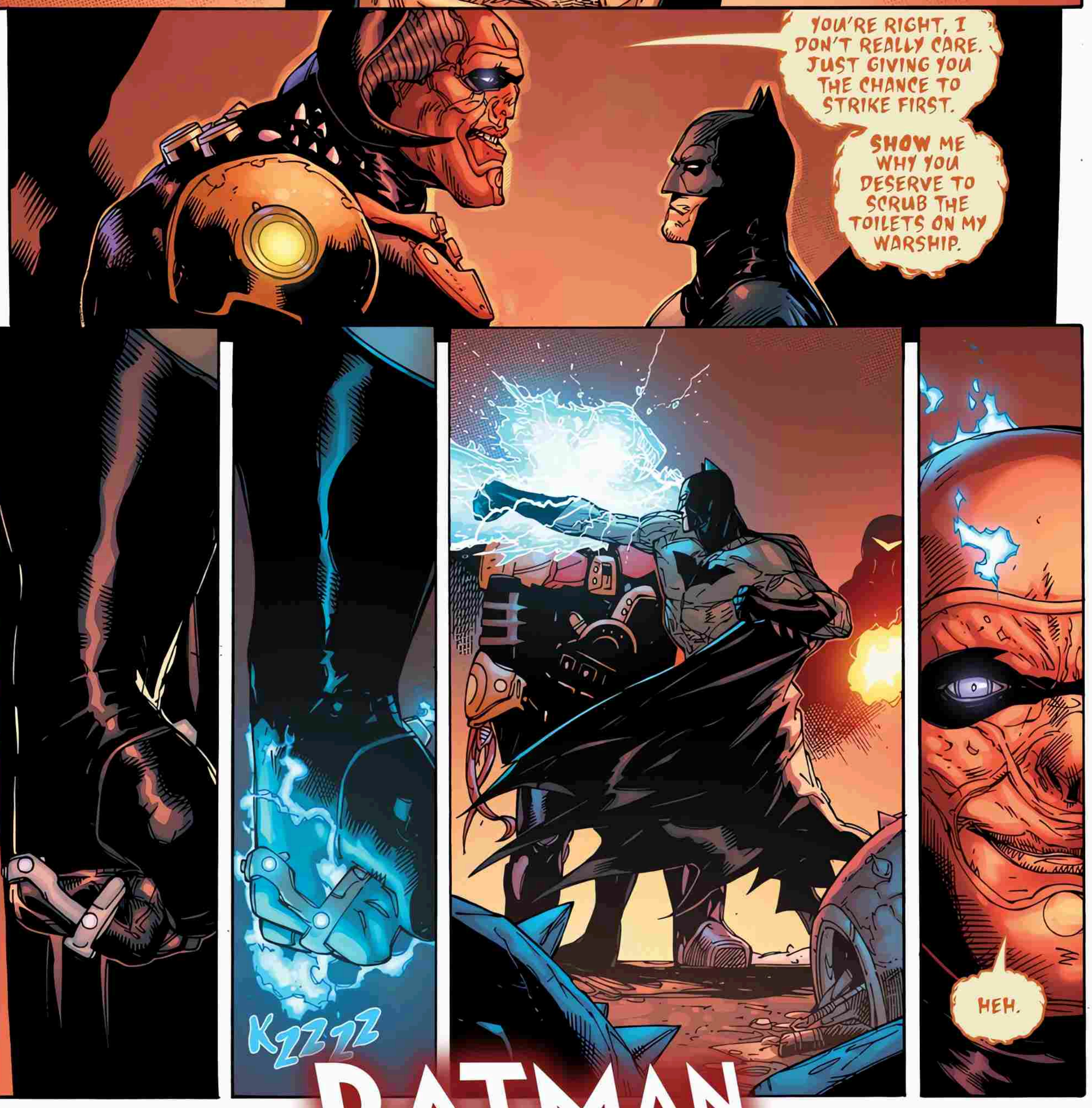


PREVIEW

BATMAN OFF-WORLD

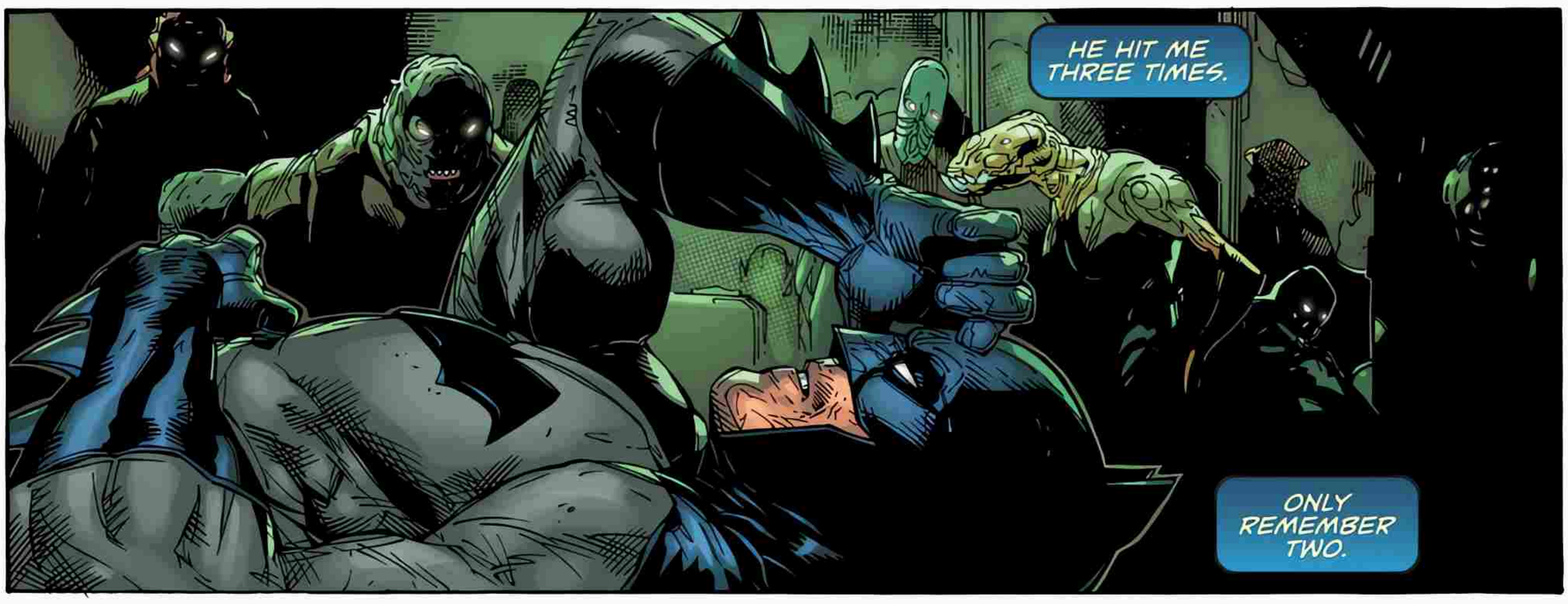
PREVIEW




YOU'RE RIGHT, I DON'T REALLY CARE. JUST GIVING YOU THE CHANCE TO STRIKE FIRST.
SHOW ME WHY YOU DESERVE TO SCRUB THE TOILETS ON MY WARSHIP.
KZZZZ
HEH.

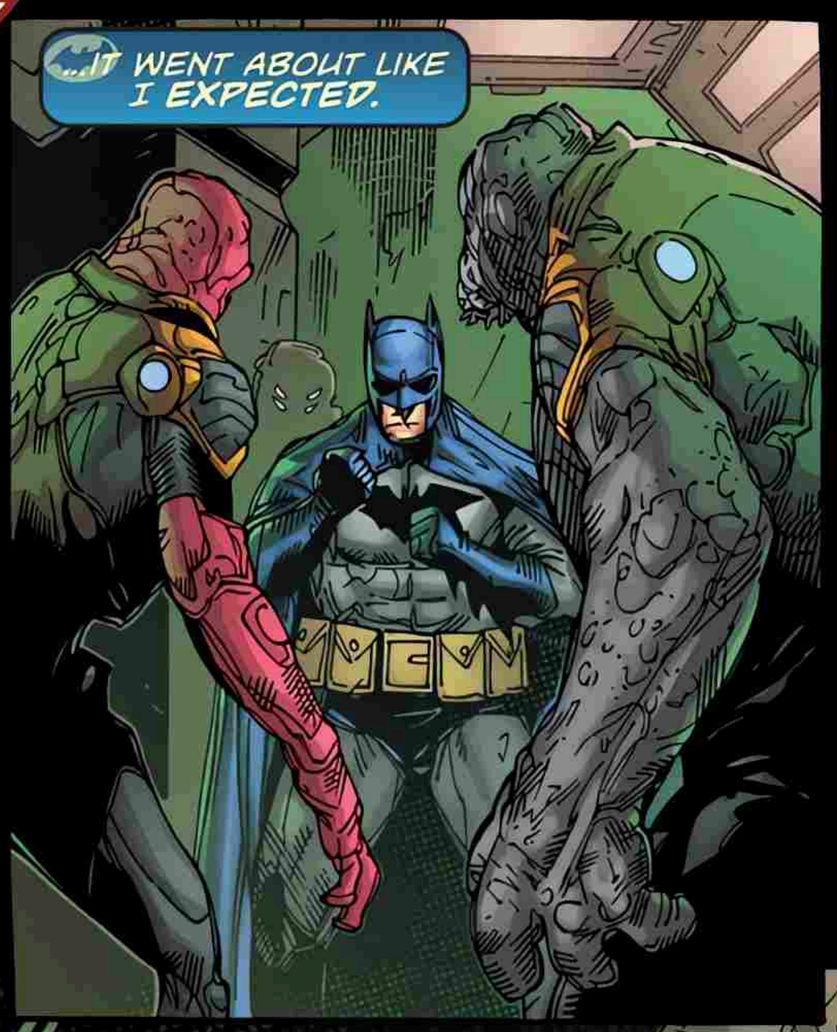
BATMAN OFF-WORLD

PREVIEW PREVIEW



FIRST PUNCH BROKE FOUR RIBS, DISLOCATED MY RIGHT HIP.
SECOND SHATTERED MY NOSE AND CRACKED MY ORBITAL BONE.
SURPRISED THE THIRD DIDN'T KILL ME.
HNNG.

PREVIEW **BATMAN OFF-WORLD** PREVIEW



READ MORE IN BATMAN OFF-WORLD #1, ON SALE IN NOVEMBER!

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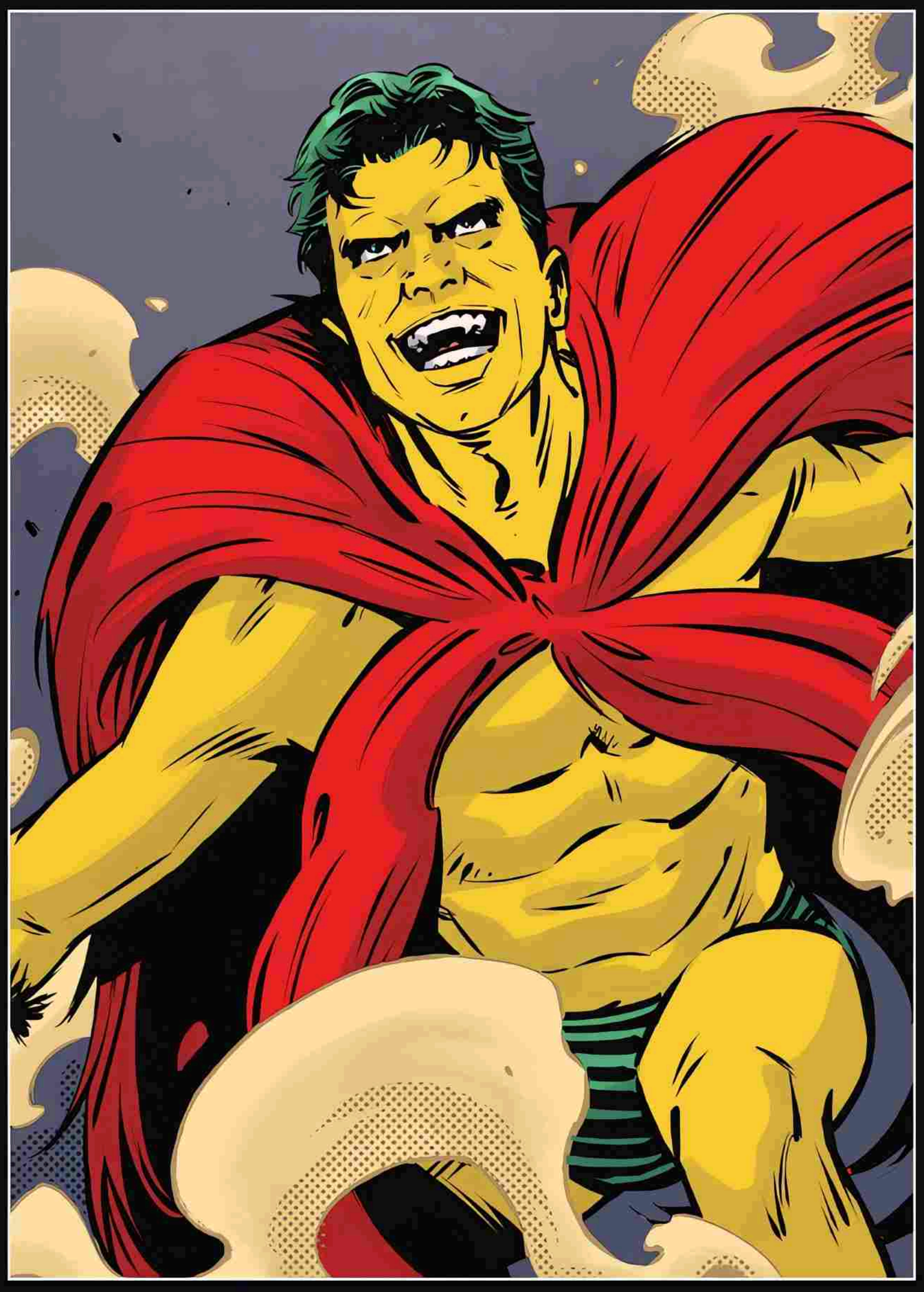

"I **NEED** THE HELMET! AND YOU **WILL** GIVE IT TO ME!"

DC BLACK LABEL